



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Comments of Sen. Chuck Grassley, of Iowa
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance
News Conference on the Tax Debate in the Senate
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There's a lot of talk about how quickly the House is moving on the tax bill and the contrast with the Senate. Well, consider this. Tax legislation flows like a river. It starts in the House, where it's like a river in the mountains, swift-moving and even a little rough. As it reaches the Senate downstream that river moves a lot slower, and calmer.

So here's a report on the status of that tax debate in the Senate. Even though tax cuts will take a bit longer to wind through this side of the Capitol, taxpayers should know that help is on the way. Before spring gives way to summer, I'm confident tax dollars will be flowing back to where they belong, with the taxpayers.

In the Finance Committee, we're holding hearings on the President's plan and other proposals. Yesterday we looked at the need to reduce marginal tax rates. Individual taxpayers built the tax surplus, and cutting rates will stimulate the economy by changing the mind-set of consumers, investors, and employers. This morning we looked at the need for family tax relief, including the President's plan to double the child tax credit and reduce the marriage penalty. We also focused on the alternative minimum tax and its growing burden on middle-income families. Next week, we'll explore tax breaks for charitable giving and repeal of the death tax. We've already looked at tax incentives for education, and in the weeks ahead we'll consider energy tax bills. Our plan is to finish these hearings and mark-up a tax bill in May.

Alongside this committee work, the House vote today is good news for taxpayers. There's a new attitude in Washington. President Bush made tax relief and debt reduction a cornerstone of his agenda, along with funding America's priorities for education, Social Security, Medicare, and the environment. Non-partisan budget forecasts underscore the need to reduce the tax burden on Americans. Their hard work and productivity account for the swelling surpluses in the federal Treasury. And the momentum marked by today's vote gives those taxpayers a reason to rejoice. In the Senate, our legislative strategy is necessarily different. But our interest in reducing the tax burden for American families is the same.

I look forward to continuing my work with the White House, and with Sen. Baucus and other Democratic senators to build support for a bipartisan tax cut package in the Senate.